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CHURCHILL DOWNS OPENS 11-DAY SEPTEMBER MEET FRIDAY AT 12:45 P.M.; HORSEMEN TO COMPETE FOR RECORD PRIZE MONEY OVER THREE WEEKS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2018) – Horse racing on the Kentucky circuit shifts to Churchill Downs on Friday (Sept. 14) with a 10-race program at 12:45 p.m. (all times Eastern) as the famed Louisville racetrack opens its sixth September Meet for an action-packed 11-date run through Sunday, Sept. 30.

This year's three-week, boutique race meeting, presented by **Commonwealth Technology**, will feature record purse levels. Horsemen can compete for \$5.275 million in prize money offered in Director of Racing **Ben Huffman's** 109-race September Meet condition book, which averages to \$479,545 per day. Last year, an unprecedented \$4.692 million was paid to horsemen for a daily average of \$427,000, which was up 12% from the prior year.

Inaugurated in 2013 by request from Kentucky horsemen, the three-week September Meet provides area horse owners, trainers and jockeys a viable racing option to compete for ample prize money mainly on dirt during an important time on the racing calendar in advance of the popular Keeneland and Churchill Downs fall meets.

A total of 97 horses and four also-eligible entries were drawn Tuesday for Friday's opener for a lofty average of 9.7 horses per race. The average field size during last year's meeting was a September record 8.9 horses.

The 10-race card features a trio of allowance races and two maiden special weights. The featured ninth race at 4:53 p.m., a \$60,000 allowance/optional claiming event (\$100,000 claiming tag) over seven furlongs, attracted a field of nine 3-year-olds, including **Three Chimneys Farm's Principe Guilherme**, the Lecomte (Grade III) runner-up who'll make his first start for Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen** since finishing seventh at odds of 5-2 in the Feb. 17 Risen Star (GII) at Fair Grounds. Five of his rivals are stakes winners, including Ellis Park Derby runner-up **Kowboy Karma**; last year's Ellis Park Juvenile winner **Dak Attack**, who will make his first start in 251 days; Hutcheson Stakes (GIII) winner **Madison's Luna**; and 2017 Arlington-Washington Futurity champ **Barry Lee** for **Sagamore Farm's** new trainer **Stan Hough**, who will saddle his first starter since April 5, 2012.

"Stanley Hough has been breaking the young horses for Sagamore Farm in Ocala, Fla. the past couple years," Huffman said. "I just remember 20 years ago when he was training stakes winners all over the east coast and Florida. He's a really good trainer and he's going to train privately for the Sagamore Farm of **Kevin Plank**. He called me the other day and he will be here for all of September and Fall. He even mentioned he may be looking to buy a home in Louisville.

"Our trainer colony is really strong here. We try and bring in new faces every year but it's going to be fun the next few years when we have guys like Stan Hough coming back and perhaps some of these other guys that have been in New York and Florida for a long time that are wanting to try Kentucky."

With the Breeders' Cup World Championships set to return to Churchill Downs during the 21-day Fall Meet on Nov. 2-3, several new trainers will have horses stabled at the Louisville track for the first time in many years, including **Keith Desormeaux**, two-time Kentucky Derby winner **Nick Zito** and newcomer **Chad Summers**.

"A big part of the Breeders' Cup being here at Churchill Downs is that we are going to have a lot of people that are trying to get a run over this track," Huffman said. "When Breeders' Cup is here, that always helps your stakes races.

"Nominations haven't even closed for the (Grade III, \$200,000) Lukas Classic (for 3-year-olds and up at 1 1/8 miles on Sept. 29) but I can already tell you (three-time Grade I-winning sprinter and Whitney runner-up) **Mind Your Biscuits'** next start will be in the Lukas Classic. Also, **Toast of New York** is coming from Europe to get a trip over the track prior to the Breeders' Cup. Things like that helps our other stakes races.

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“Keith Desormeaux is going to send five or six horses. He says he’s going to stay even after the Breeders’ Cup. Chad Summers is coming with one or two horses. He, too, has mentioned running in the Breeders’ Cup and sticking around for the Clark Handicap (GI). We were able to squeeze Nick Zito in for the September and Fall Meet with a small division of 12. He normally doesn’t race with us September or the fall. Things like that are indication that things may be changing with guys like that stabling here this year.”

A major focus for many horsemen during the second of the year is the development of 2-year-olds. Friday’s eighth race, a \$56,000 maiden special weight at one mile, attached 13 two-year-old fillies, and it’s the first of 16 maiden, allowance or stakes races for juveniles during the September Meet.

“Being in the horse capital of the world, we are inundated with 2-year-olds,” Huffman said. “During this time of the year, from September to the end of November, I’m very happy to have all of these 2-year-olds. They’re good betting races and full fields. We try to split as many of them as we can and it’s because we have an abundance of 2-year-olds. They’ve been training all spring and summer and the majority of them are ready to run.”

Road to Kentucky Derby Kickoff Highlights Opening Weekend Stakes Quartet

The September Meet’s nine-race stakes schedule cumulatively worth \$1.125 million kicks off Saturday with a stakes quartet, including two important 1 1/16-mile fixtures for juveniles that could produce starters in next spring’s Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve (Grade I) and the Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI). The \$150,000 **Iroquois** (GIII) kicks off the “Road to the Kentucky Derby” series (Top 4 Points: 10-4-2-1), while the \$200,000 **Pocahontas** (GII) starts the “Road to the Kentucky Oaks” (Top 4 Points: 10-4-2-1). Also, both races are **Breeders’ Cup “Win and You’re In” Challenge** events, which means the winners will receive automatic berths in the starting gate for their respective Breeders’ Cup races on Nov. 2 at Churchill Downs with full entry fees and travel expenses paid.

Saturday’s stakes foursome is completed by a pair of stakes for fillies and mares, the \$100,000 **Locust Grove** (GIII) over 1 1/16 miles and \$100,000 **Open Mind** at six furlongs.

Entries for Saturday’s 11-race card will be taken Wednesday morning.

“Opening Saturday with the two 2-year-old stakes races, the Iroquois and Pocahontas, they lead off the Road to the Kentucky Derby and Road to the Kentucky Oaks,” Huffman said. “I do offer a couple of 2-year-old maiden races on that Saturday and the last two years I’ve split both races. So, it’s kind of like a mini Stars of Tomorrow.”

2018 Churchill Downs’ Nine-Race, \$1.125 Million September Meet Stakes Schedule

Day	Date	No.	Grade	Purse	Stakes Race	Conditions	Distance
Saturday	Sept. 15	50 th	II	\$200,000	Pocahontas	2yo F	1 1/16 M
Saturday	Sept. 15	37 th	III	\$150,000	Iroquois	2yo	1 1/16 M
Saturday	Sept. 15	35 th	III	\$100,000	Locust Grove	F&M, 3&cup	1 1/16 M
Saturday	Sept. 15	10 th		\$100,000	Open Mind	F&M, 3&cup	6 F
Saturday	Sept. 22	43 rd		\$100,000	Dogwood (Listed)	3yo F	7 F
Saturday	Sept. 29	6 th	III	\$200,000	Lukas Classic	3&cup	1 1/8 M
Saturday	Sept. 29	26 th	III	\$100,000	Ack Ack	3&cup	1 M
Saturday	Sept. 29	41 st		\$100,000	Jefferson Cup (Listed)	3yo	1 1/8 M (T)
Saturday	Sept. 29	8 th	I	\$100,000	President of the United Arab Emirates Cup	Arabian 4&cup	1 1/16 M

Downs After Dark on Saturday, Sept. 29 at 6 p.m.; Bourbon & Beats is Theme

The \$200,000 Lukas Classic (Grade III), along with the \$100,000 Ack Ack for milers (GIII), \$100,000 Jefferson Cup (Listed) for 3-year-olds at 1 1/8 miles on turf and \$100,000 **President of the UAE Cup** (GI) for Arabians 4-years-old and up at 1 1/16 miles, will be the featured events on Saturday, Sept. 29 – the lone **Downs After Dark Presented by Budweiser** night racing event of the September Meet and last one of the year. The event theme that evening will be **Bourbon & Beats** and guests are encouraged to wear shades of purple and stay on trend with autumn fashion as they celebrate a pairing of Kentucky sounds and spirits.

Ideal Weather: Sunny Skies, Mid-to-Upper 80s

Opening weekend weather in Louisville will be ideal, according to the **National Weather Service**, with a forecast of sunny skies and temperatures in the mid-to-upper 80s.

Racing Thursday-Sunday; First Race 12:45 p.m. Most Days

Churchill Downs' 11-day meet will be staged over three weekends through Sunday, Sept. 30 with racing on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The first race will be 12:45 p.m. daily (admission gates open at 11:30 a.m.) with the exception of a pair of 5 p.m. (gates at 4 p.m.) Twilight Thursdays and a 6 p.m. first post (gates at 5 p.m.) on Saturday, Sept. 29.

Popular 5 p.m. 'Twilight Thursdays' Return With \$1 Beer, Live Music, Food Trucks, Lawn Games

The two **Twilight Thursdays** will feature \$1 beer, live music (**Sheryl Rouse Band** on Sept. 20 and **Roadie** on Sept. 27), food trucks (**Flavaville**, **Red Top Gourmet Hot Dogs**, **Zoom Zoom Yum**, **Mark's Feed Store** and **Pollo**), and lawn games (Snookball, Corn Hole and Giant Jenga) in Churchill Downs' Plaza from 5-8 p.m.

Family Adventure Day Scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 23

Family Adventure Day Presented by Kroger is scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 23. Families are encouraged to bring the kids to Churchill Downs for a day of racing and family activities including pony rides, inflatables, petting zoo, stick horse races on the turf course, face painting and more. The theme is **"Be Creative!"** and special happenings include science activities from **The Kentucky Science Center**; arts and crafts with **Side by Side Studio**; a mobile recording studio with **AMPED: The Academy of Music Production, Education and Development**; practice printmaking basics with **KMAC**; and interaction with the **Kentucky Department of Agriculture**.

Tickets for adults and children age 3 and up are just \$8 when purchased online in advance at ChurchillDowns.com, and include unlimited access to all kid-friendly activities through 5 p.m. Churchill Downs is also offering a Family Four Pack that includes four Family Adventure Day tickets, four family meals in the Family Adventure Day area and two racing programs for only \$44 (a \$59 package includes reserved box seats).

Betting Menu Features 20-Cent Single 6 Jackpot

The betting menu will be the same as recent meets and includes the 20-cent minimum **"Single 6 Jackpot,"** which is offered on the last six races each day with a low 15-percent takeout. The Single 6 Jackpot will be paid out only if there is a single winning wager with six winners placed at the required minimum bet value. If there are multiple winning wagers with six winners in the six-race sequence, 90 percent of the net money wagering into the pool will be paid out, and the remaining 10 percent will carry to the Single 6 Jackpot. If there are no tickets will all six winners, 100 percent of the pool will carry to the Single 6 Jackpot. There will be a mandatory payout on closing day.

Lanerie, Cox, McPeck, Ramseys Defend September Titles

Veteran jockey **Corey Lanerie**, fresh off of winning the Ellis Park riding title with 30 winners, had the hot hand during last year's September Meet with a record 25 wins, 15 more than **Florent Geroux** and **Brian Hernandez Jr.** Hernandez defeated Geroux, 43-38, during the Spring Meet for his first local leading rider title. Fifteen-time Churchill Downs champion Lanerie was third with 35 wins but missed the final seven racing days following the sudden death of his wife **Shantel**.

Louisville native **Brad Cox** and **Kenny McPeck** shared the training title at last year's September Meet with seven wins apiece. Cox finished second and six wins back of Asmussen during the Spring Meet, who won his record-extending 19th local training title with 30 winners.

The leading owners during last September were **Ken and Sarah Ramsey** of Nicholasville, Ky., who won five races. The couple was victorious in nine races during the Spring Meet to collect their 31st crown as Churchill Downs' top owners. Overall, they've won 487 races beneath the Twin Spires to easily be the track's all-time leading owners.

General Admission, Reserved Seating Options

General admission to Churchill Downs is \$3 (\$1 for seniors age 60 and up) and \$10 for Downs After Dark on Saturday, Sept. 29. Reserved box seats are \$10 (\$25 for Downs After Dark) and indoor dining options are \$39 (\$73 for Downs After Dark). Children 12 and under are admitted free when accompanied by an adult (Downs After Dark policy: no one under the age of 18 will be admitted to the track unless they are accompanied by a parent or responsible adult). Tickets can be purchased online at www.ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets or by calling (502) 636-4400. For parking information, please visit: <https://www.churchilldowns.com/visit/info/parking>

Senior Day on Friday, Sept. 28

The lone **Senior Day** of the September Meet at Churchill Downs is scheduled for Friday, Sept. 28. Guests 60 and up can enjoy lunch and a day at the races in Millionaires Row for only \$24.

'Stakes and Eggs' Sunday Brunch

On Sundays, Churchill Downs is offering a special **"Stakes and Eggs" brunch special** in the Stakes Room. The \$45 package for adults and \$22 package for children includes a seat in the Stakes Room on the fourth floor of the Clubhouse and all-you-can-eat access to the brunch menu that includes an omelet station, scrambled eggs, biscuits and country gravy, French toast, hot brown, carved country ham, crispy bacon, sausage patties, hash brown potatoes with peppers and onions, fresh fruit, garden vegetables, breakfast breads and a chef's dessert display.

Odds and Ends

Travis Stone will describe the racing action throughout the September Meet Presented by Commonwealth Technology with **Joe Kristufek** serving as a paddock analyst. Veteran odds maker **Mike Battaglia** has morning line odds duty for the 44th consecutive year.

For more information, call (502) 636-4400 or visit www.churchilldowns.com.

Churchill Downs, the world's most legendary racetrack, has conducted Thoroughbred racing and presented America's greatest race, the Kentucky Derby, continuously since 1875. Located in Louisville, the flagship racetrack of Churchill Downs Incorporated (NASDAQ: CHDN) offers year-round simulcast wagering at the historic track. Churchill Downs will conduct the 145th running of the Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve on May 4, 2019. The track's 2018 September Meet is set for Sept. 14-30 and its Fall Meet will run from Oct. 28-Nov. 25. An eight-time host to the Breeders' Cup World Championships, Churchill Downs will again be the site of that event on Nov. 2-3, 2018. Information is available at www.ChurchillDowns.com.

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